INCOMING TELEGRAM — Department of State — EXDIS

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Control: 13202
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FROM: Habana

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 2425, March 18, 1 p.m.

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MR

[redacted] informed me last night that he had conversation with Fidel Castro at [redacted] that went along this line: B1, EB

Castro: What do you think of things?

[redacted] I think you made a bad mistake in accusing US of complicity in ship explosion. B1, EB

Castro: Maybe, but what do you expect in view of economic aggression they are committing against Cuba in request for revision of Sugar Act.

[redacted] I believe you have wrong slant on that. It is to Cuba's advantage for power to change quotas to be transferred from Congress to President. President has shown no animosity toward Cuba whereas Cuba has many enemies in Congress. B1, EB

[redacted] thought that this argument has considerably impressed Castro. During same conversation it came out that Roa had never told Castro about his talk with [redacted] reported in reference telegram and Castro was obviously annoyed at Roa for not having done so. B1, EB

I feel sure above exchange took place in presence of a number of other people since Castro always surrounded when he appears at social functions. Moreover, [redacted] asked me yesterday B1, EB

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ENCLOSURE

yesterday if [redacted] was mediating between US and Cuba. I told [redacted] of course not but that [redacted] like many other mutual friends of US and Cuba, were trying to promote harmonious settlement of differences. Incidentally, [redacted] expressed view that unless some amicable settlement reached soon between Cuba and US Cuban economy, which was declining rapidly, would be ruined within three months. We hear many conflicting opinions on this subject, but that so pessimistic a view should be expressed by a representative of country on such friendly and intimate terms with GOC may be significant.

B1, EB

B1, EB

BRADDOCK

MLJ/6